TEAMSTERS LOCAL 705 UPDATE

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This special multi-issue 10th Anniversary UPDATE covers ten years of Local 705 reform since the 1993 trusteeship.

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10th Anniversary

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 705

Photo by Earl Dotter

A Decade of Delivery for Our Members

Anniversaries are a time for reflection.... looking back at how things were and assessing where we are now and how we got there.

This new 705 UPDATE examines the 10th anniversary of real reform in America's largest Teamster truck drivers' local union. We will tell the inside story of one of the most remarkable turn-arounds ever seen by any local union anywhere in the American labor movement.

Ten years ago, our current Secretary-Treasurer Gerald Zero was a newly appointed International Union Representative—and only a few weeks before had been a freight driver for Howard Delivery. Zero had been a persistent critic of the corrupt practices that had riddled the Local for years. He found himself entering a hornets' nest of corruption, mob-influenced labor relations scams and systemic financial wrongdoing—especially in the Health & Welfare and Pension Funds.

A devastating investigative report had just been issued late that May of 1993, digging into the financial ripoffs plaguing Local 705. The report was sponsored by the Independent Review Board (IRB), a three-member body created by the 1989 Consent Decree between the U.S. Department of Justice and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to rid the union of mob influence and corrupt practices.

The IRB report disclosed that the entire Local 705 Executive Board "breached their fiduciary duties, embezzled and converted union funds...and engaged in financial wrongdoing." This was only a year after the IRB had determined that then Secretary-Treasurer Danny Ligurotis had "embezzled Local 705 funds...(was) treating the Local as if it were his personal piggy bank" and had illegaly hired with Local 705 funds several men who had been convicted of extortion, arson and consorting with members of organized crime families.

The IRB ordered that Local 705 be placed into trusteeship, and a team was brought in to clean up the financial equivalent of an Exxon Valdez oil spill.

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An Appreciation from Jerry Zero

Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

10th Anniversary
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 705

With a name like Zero, I've got to deliver—especially for the rank-and-file members of Local 705.

That's what the past 10 years have been all about. Delivering the goods when it comes to open and clean governance, accountable finances, organizing triumphs resulting in enforceable contracts, a responsive steward system, grievances and arbitration victories that begin to restore justice to the age-old struggles between labor and management.

But these goals were the farthest things from the minds of the corrupt Ligurotis officers who ran Local 705 like a feudal fiefdom and considered our treasury and funds to be their own personal property.

In the months following the 1993 trusteeship we were finally able to examine the previous leadership's books—and we became appalled at the depth of the corruption involving not only Secretary-Treasurer Danny Ligurotis and his Executive Board but their doctors and lawyers in at least four separate schemes.

When our lawyers finally finished a 20-month investigation after the trusteeship and filed a lawsuit against the Ligurotis executive board, their insurance company quickly settled for $13.5 million in losses and damages.

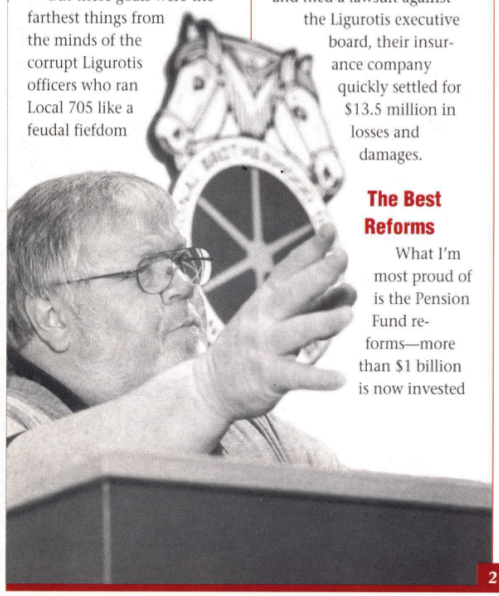


Photo by Earl Dotter

The Best Reforms

What I'm most proud of is the Pension Fund reforms—more than $1 billion is now invested (compared to $520 million).

After only one year off the truck, I was suddenly viewed as the expert here on stocks and bonds. The trick was choosing the right allocations. I put together a team of Jack Marco and Barbara Hillman, among others. I think we've done a terrific job—I'm really happy with our accomplishments and proud of putting so much time and effort into it.

"Democracy in labor unions requires that unions be more than free of corrupt leaders; they must be pluralistic institutions responsive to membership demands."

–Dr. Robert Bruno

The Ligurotis crew, by comparison, had $100 million in the LaSalle Bank entirely in bonds in the early 1990s—and they lost probably $40 million for Local 705 because it was not in stocks as well.

Economic inflation has been up 22 percent from 1993 until now—but our pension fund has gone up by 100 percent since 1993 due to a solid investment program. And remember, this was done while enacting several major pension payment increases.

When it comes to the H&W Fund, the first reform was to kick out the St. Joseph's Hospital and go to the Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans. Now our members are pushing to get back into our H&W program with Blue Cross.

I'm proud that we kept a tight line on the officers' and staff salaries, even with the membership increasing 30 to 40 percent to 20,000-plus at last count. And we got rid of the Lincoln Town cars—instead we gave everyone a car allowance for their personal vehicle, and saved at least $75,000 a year for the Local.

And I'm proud we eliminated many of the Business Agent jobs and changed the job description itself to the more accurate title of "Union Representative" just to eliminate any confusion. And we also began monitoring their whereabouts and performances for the Local's needs and goals.

I don't want to play the Grinch, but we also terminated the annual Christmas Party—to which the rank-and-file members were not even invited anyway—where the Ligurotis crew had been buying gift cases of liquor for the employers' executives.

I always thought that the employers had been receiving enough gifts each year with the horseshit contracts the Local 705 hierarchy had been approving.

A Vision for the Future

The number-one priority for Local 705's future is organizing. With the economy being so bad in recent years, we've actually had people approaching us to help them organize, join the Teamsters and confront management.

The second priority is continued growth in the Pension Fund, while remaining careful and cautious—it simply is not prudent to rush into things.

And the third priority is to focus on full-time jobs, especially at UPS. In the last two UPS contracts we've gained more full-time jobs than anywhere else in the nation—but we've got to build on that. It's a must-do priority.

"Social Justice" issues

We also must continue to work for labor-friendly politicians—it's tough now during this second round of Bush years, but this is cyclical. Working people can only take it for so long before they revolt and throw the bad guys out. Trade unions must take a leading role in this or they will only decline in membership and political influence.

Here in Chicago we work closely with four or five friendly aldermen, with the Coalition for the Homeless, with the Rainbow Coalition—and we work with the people here in our own neighborhood around Teamster City. It's a two-way street—here on the near West Side and all across Chicago.

When we first started 10 years ago, most of our members had no idea what the SEIU or UNITE stood for or were all about. But now the members are informed.

New Book on Local 705

A remarkable new book has been published this summer here in Illinois about the impressive, unprecedented turnaround of values and victories by the rank-and-file members in Local 705. It is written by a University of Illinois labor studies professor, Dr. Robert Bruno, and bears the straightforward title of "Reforming the Chicago Teamsters—The Story of Local 705."

Four years in the making, this 162-page book is a good read for anyone who cares about this Local, this international union and the emerging movement of union democracy in North America.

Photo by Earl Dotter

(Above and below) Members line up to have their say in "open mike" time at the March membership meeting—a practice unheard of before the 1993 trusteeship.

They have voted every year to give the free holiday turkeys previously raffled off to our members instead to the unemployed and disadvantaged in our community. The newspaper strike in Detroit was a great example of teaching our members about solidarity—taking them on the road a few hundred miles to learn about their brothers' and sisters' needs in another city's crisis situation.

Unlike 10 years ago in 1993, I believe that Local 705 today has become a united Local.

I also believe that we have the best informed members in the entire Teamsters union. They read our first-rate newsletter and at the membership meetings they routinely use the floor mikes to ask questions of the officers and they commonly call me on the telephone.

The main thing is that the members now are involved—and they seem happy with the way things are progressing.

My biggest message to all the new members is to get involved—this is their union as much as anyone else's. There are very smart people out there of all sizes, genders and races. But if they don't get involved, the chances of a decline back into the corrupt old days are only increased.

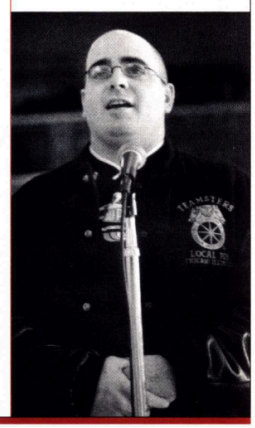


Photo by Earl Dotter

Photo by Earl Dotter

Reform: We're In It For the Long Haul

Although it didn't show in their wage scales, Freight members suffered with the rest of the Local from the Ligurotis brand of unionism. Heading into the 1994 Freight negotiations, and barely settled into their new responsibilities, the new 705 administration had discovered that a lot of ground needed to be made up for years of Pension and Health & Welfare Funds chicanery and neglect.

Not one single penny had been allocated to the Pension Fund since 1986. All non-wage negotiated money had gone into the Health & Welfare sinkhole that Ligurotis and his buddies had used for favors, pay-offs and kick-backs. As a result, Freight pensions had been frozen at $1,500 per month for 25-and-out for far too long.

The new leadership also knew that a full-scale attack would be made on Local 705's hard-won work rule improvements and economic gains achieved in the Louis Peick era—including extra pay for twin trailers, night premium pay and a clear division between Shuttle and P&D work.

Local 705 was the only Teamster Local in the country that won and held these gains, and Freight management was determined to win them back. Management also was determined to beat back an innovative new addition to Grievance procedure demands: "Innocent Until Proven Guilty", designed to stop the companies from firing hundreds of members per year over minor offenses.

Major Victories Kept in 1998 Talks

In fact, the reform team had completely rebuilt the Funds in the course of a few short years. Pension contributions had doubled before the mid-point of the 1998 contract. Freight members saw major pension increases, with the Pension Fund itself increasing more than 100% above the rate of inflation (see Fund story on page 11 for details). Negotiated Health & Welfare contributions restored the 705 Health & Welfare Fund benefits to the best in the nation.

That wasn't all. Local 705's tough bargaining position, backed by the message sent in the 1994 strike, held on to all the previous gains won—and brought more money into member benefits than any other Teamster Local.

Three Week Strike Saved Gains, Added Job Protections

Controversy over the trusteeship, political opportunism and confusion over the future of Local 705 led to hard bargaining with management as well as, occasionally, our membership. But the new leadership never lost its focus and held on through the nearly-one-month strike to:

- Rebuild Pension Fund contributions
- Save the Twin Trailer and Night Premium pay
- Gain "Innocent Until Proven Guilty"

2003 Talks Buck National Trend

Today we read about it in the newspapers daily. Thousands of lay-offs. Wage freezes. Collapsing pension funds. Big health care co-pays. Workers across the country—union and non-union alike—are under siege. Management demands concessions (from everyone but themselves) to cover up their own failures, and the Bush Administration refuses to help anyone but their wealthy contributors.

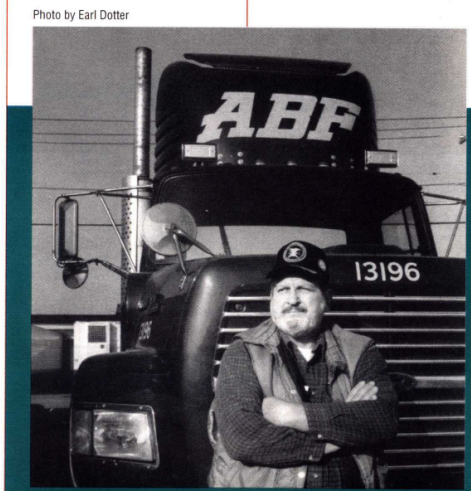
In many ways, Freight management has been no different. Among their demands this year were increased health care co-pays, "A Driver is a Driver" rule and the institution of a Premium Service program that would eliminate jobs and would also lower pay scales for the work.

But following the pattern established in 1994, the rank-and-file bargaining team said "No." Although talks continued at press time, Local 705 led the country by:

- Banning Premium Service in Local 705 jurisdiction;
- Bargaining more money for Pension and Health & Welfare than anywhere else;
- Rejecting give-backs in premium pay or "A Driver is a Driver"; and
- Winning language improvements and clarifications on empties drops and modified work.

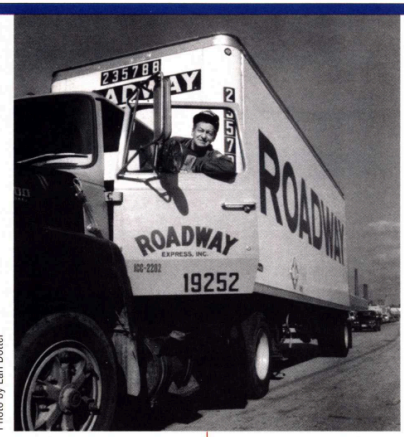
After three TMI contracts, the message is clear: reform works. The leadership, backed by strong rank-and-file bargaining committees and stewards have achieved better wages, pensions and health care. No give-backs on premium pay and work rules. Hundreds of jobs saved every year through a strong grievance procedure. The war may never be over, but the battles are clearly being won.

Photo by Earl Dotter



705 members were ready for change in 1993—and the 1994 Freight and Cartage contracts showed the first tangible results.

Photo by Earl Dotter



Jerry Blitstein, a veteran driver for Yellow Freight, is a 3rd generation Teamster whose father worked for nearly 30 different trucking companies and whose grandfather unloaded crates of glass bottles from railroad boxcars onto the truck.

"I am Jewish — and under the Ligurotis regime, they wouldn't even buzz me through the door at Local 705 headquarters," recalls Blitstein. "Now there are no more racial barriers...blacks, Latinos, women, everyone is equal in this Local and all the bullshit they used to separate us has been overcome."

"Even though we're not as great in Freight numbers, we are still the most vocal," Blitstein chuckles. " We holler at Jerry from the meeting microphones and he hears us out — because he knows we will be there when 705 needs us on the picket lines and the strike lines."

—Jerry Blitstein

We Put the Horses Before the Cartage

Local 705's Pension and Health & Welfare scandals weren't limited to the Freight industry 10 years ago. The newly installed trustees and their team found the same problems in Cartage—and with the MCLAC contract expiring at the same time as the Freight agreement, the need to attack Cartage problems was just as urgent.

Unfortunately, the problems didn't stop there. Unlike Freight, where at least the salaries were uniform and membership was clear, Cartage contracts and their addenda were a nightmare. At Carmichael Cartage, for example, wages for the drivers were spread among 17 different tiers. A few members were making industry scale, but the majority were mired at wages as much as $6- or $7-per-hour lower for doing the same work.

In some other barns, you had to organize a search party to find which drivers were union members because the Ligurotis crew had allowed the boss to "red circle" union membership, causing union membership to shrink to almost nothing as drivers retired or unfairly were fired.

(continued on page 6)

Photo by Earl Dotter

Cartage *(continued from page 5)*

Local 705 member Rich Milewski every workday delivers sheets and coils of steel, titanium and nickle from the Castle Steel Company to their metal fabricating customers in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

Milewski remembers the bad old days under Ligurotis and his mentor Louis Peick. "They were terrible—they didn't care about us," says Rich. "They just did what they wanted."

But since the trusteeship, "the reformers and their reps have turned things around 110 percent," he adds. "Pensions are up, dental is up, vision care is up. And finally, grievances are being conducted in the right way."

—Richard L. Milewski, Cartage

Nearly 300 contracts and addenda were due for bargaining and nearly all of them were a mess. But the newly installed leadership was determined to fix it. They dug in for a long, hard fight—and just as they'd done in Freight, great strides were made in less than two contract cycles.

Chicago-area Cartage firms also were hit hard by deregulation as an anti-union White House and Congress drove many local trucking companies to merge or outright fold their tents.

A major issue for veteran Local 705 Cartage drivers has been increasing the employer contributions to our own Local 705 Pension Fund. A key breakthrough occurred late in 2001 when Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Zero persuaded a majority of the Fund trustees to approve increased pension payments for members with more than 30 years in service.

For each year in excess of 30 years, the participant will receive an additional $100 per month in pension benefits. For pensioneers who retire after 41 years on the job, that adds up to "real money"—specifically, a $4,100 monthly pension instead of the former $3,000 per month.

These Cartage retirees are now receiving pension benefits equivalent to those of their brothers and sisters employed at United Parcel Service.

For Cartage retirees, the pension formula is more complex because different companies pay into the Local 705 Pension Fund at different rates, based on a monthly maximum contribution (that maximum became $151 per month as of Jan. 1, 2002). If a member's Cartage company has been contributing 80 percent of the maximum, for example, then the retiree receives 80 percent of that maximum as his or her extra monthly benefit.

Pension benefits for Cartage workers have been increasing steadily since 1996, when drivers with 25 years of service were receiving only $1,600 per month at retirement—and those with 30 years experience were getting $2,100.

By early 1998, Cartage pensioneers with 25 years on the job had been boosted to $2,500 per month and those with 30 years were increased to $3,000 monthly.

Under the Local 705 reformers' new priorities over the past decade, there have been more successful outcomes within Cartage grievances and arbitrations (as has been true in the other crafts). One concrete example is the case of a 10-year veteran driver at Carmichael Cartage who had been fired after being involved in "three allegedly preventable accidents" within three months.

The arbitrator dug into Carmichael's grounds for termination and discovered that one of the accidents was trivial and the other two minor accidents were not the driver's fault.

The driver received full back-pay and benefits for the entire 13 months he was denied his job, thanks to Local 705's legal team.

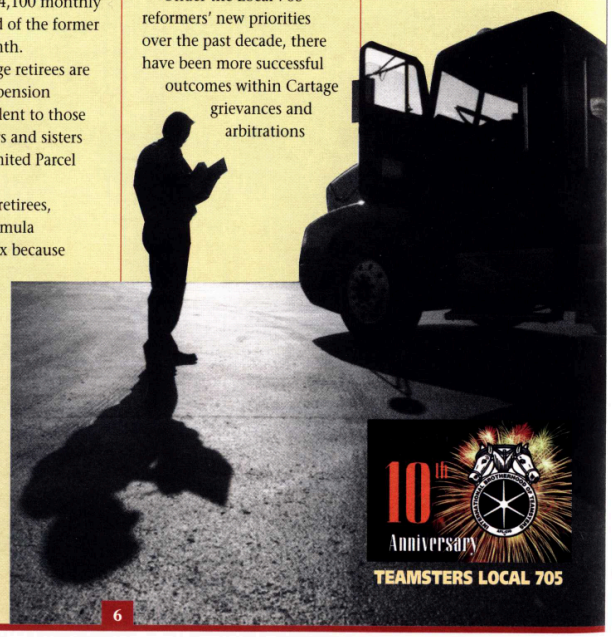
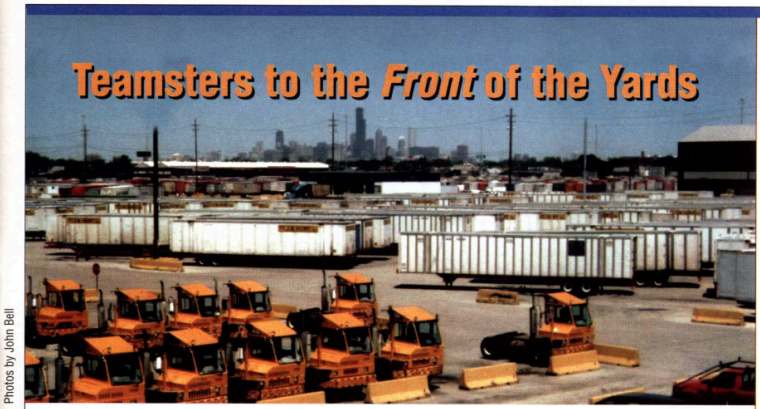


Photo by Earl Dotter

Photos by John Bell

Teamsters to the *Front* of the Yards



Ten years ago, the new Local 705 made the decision to confront the rail yards in Chicago and organize the workers there who had been neglected by the Ligurotis crew before the trusteeship. The leadership dispatched two top organizers, Paul DiGrazia and Frank Fosco, now semi-retired (but never retiring), to the George Meany Center in Washington, DC to polish their organizing capabilities.

"We had been losing ground in terms of the intermodal work being performed in the rail yards, where the huge containers from all around the world are loaded by cranes onto and off from the flatcars," recalled DiGrazia. "We first tried to organize the Willow Springs yard just southwest of Chicago in 1994, but failed. Finally we won in 2000 after six long years together."

DiGrazia reports that he and Fosco remain a tight team "on the street and in the yards. We know that with all those containers coming in like freight on flatcars every hour, the railroads are run like clockwork. And the very last thing any railroad wants is a work stoppage. That's why we've been so successful in the yards."

"These intermodal freight trains are the present and the future—they have replaced all those thousands of Teamster truck drivers—and that's why we're so determined to organize the remaining workers in those yards."

–Frank Fosco

"Train after train after train coming in and out of those yards," adds Fosco, "just like it used to be for Teamster freight trucks back before deregulation. These intermodal freight trains are the present and the future—they have replaced all those thousands of Teamster truck drivers—and that's why we're so determined to organize the remaining workers in those yards," says Fosco.

After they signed up the crane operators and spotters and hostelers and the groundmen (who lock and unlock the container trailers), Fosco and DiGrazia went after the 300 or so gate inspectors who work in the yards. Local 705 now has successfully organized virtually 100 percent of the yard workers within the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe railroad's Chicago system —and nearly 1,000 total members in the industry.

"The railroads don't want union organizing drives in their yards—that's why we often get voluntary recognition from the railroad managers who cannot tolerate any labor trouble," says Fosco, who started working in the rail yards in 1972 at the age of 36.

Rail Terminal Services (RTS) is the big vendor for BN/SF at their Corwith Yards located at South 43rd and Kedzie Avenue. The H&M Company is the big yard vendor for the Union Pacific Railroad (owner of Over Nite Trucking).

Like so many of the jobs covered by Local 705 contracts, worklife in the rail yards can be hazardous, unhealthful and even lethal. On January 11, 1999, we were stunned to learn of the deaths of three Local 705 members who were accidentally electrocuted when a trailer/container came into contact with a power line. Two of the workers were killed trying to rescue the first groundsman electrocuted. A new monument at the Corwith Yards (see photo below) memorializes Larry Henry, Robert Goldsberry (who was just weeks away from retirement), and Robert Reed, a dedicated Local 705 steward.

Local 705 grew by 100 members when the workers at the Quality Terminal Services (QTS) rail yard at 26th and Central ratified their first contract in May, 2001. They won themselves 7 percent wage hikes the first year, signing bonuses of up to $1,500 apiece and Teamster 401(k) weekly contributions—along with coverage by the Local 705 H&W Fund.

Previously these yard workers had been shelling out $200 a month for substandard health care benefits. And they

A bronze-and-granite memorial to the three Local 705 members accidentally electrocuted on-the-job stands outside Corwith Yards headquarters.

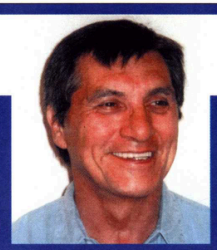
Front of the Yards

(continued from page 7)

had never been allowed to vote on their contracts—which had been little more than give-away deals with QTS management.

After the QTS win, nearly 90 more yard workers came aboard a month later at the Pac Rail Yards. These men also had become dissatisfied with their do-nothing union. "Years ago, all the yards were union, but the so-called old leaders let it all slip away," Local 705 Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Zero commented at the time.

And in September 2002, the 35 RTS gate workers (also known as "checkers") joined Local 705 under the voluntary recognition mechanism favored by the railroads. They received $2-per-hour wage increases, company-paid health insurance and first-time 401(k) retirement contributions—along with increased vacation leave, paid sick days and the security of the "innocent until proven guilty" so crucial in grievance procedures.



"The reformers at 705 — they *ought* to be proud," asserts Phil Pintor. "Since the 1970s and through the 1980s we routinely were suggesting that the former leaders organize us, since so many of the yardmen earlier had been Teamster drivers — but no dice, even though Chicago is the transportation hub of America and intermodal was the obvious future.

"The new 705 is better on grievances and safety concerns — we've had HAZMAT spills and accidental electrocutions," Pintor adds. He recites the Ligurotis stewards' stock line of "Go along with it for now and we'll look into it — and after that you never heard back from them."

"The new union rep goes straight to management — and he usually doesn't take no for an answer," reports Pintor. "He insists that we *have to* work this out some way. It's very progressive."

—Phillip Pintor, Corwith Rail Yards

A Decade of Delivery

(continued from page 1)

The team had known that something was rotten at Local 705. They'd heard about the handshake deals instead of tough contracts with employers, and they knew that pension increases were long overdue.

Almost immediately, Zero recalls, the team discovered that the mess was worse than they had ever imagined.

The Pension Fund and the Health & Welfare Fund had withered on the vine, actually losing millions each year before 1993. Teamster members were working under contracts with 15 or more graded pay scales in the same barn.

UPS members, especially the thousands of part-timers, were virtually ignored. The once-proud Local had lost thousands of members in tank haul, in the moving industry, in the rail yards, in cartage—due to the Ligurotis crew's indifference, sheer laziness and blatant corruption.

But within months it was evident that the Ligurotis allies who were ousted by the IRB would not relinquish their "piggy bank" without a protracted fight. Spurious discrimination lawsuits, physical attacks and threats, and ugly election tricks were all aimed at regaining control of Local 705's purse-strings.

There were times when the Big Lie and the dirty tricks almost won out—and reform teetered on the brink of defeat. But determined rank-and-file Teamsters beat back every attempt by the Ligurotis crew (and other wolves wrapped in the cloak of reform) to turn back the clock to the Bad Old Days.

Once the corner of reform was turned in the mid-1990s, the new leadership rarely looked back to see if something was gaining on them. The new hallmarks of Local 705 were accountability and verification.

The Ligurotis lawyers and accountants were fired, and with proper financial management soon the Local's internal finances—especially the Health & Welfare and Pension Funds—were out of the red and growing vigorously into the black.

Organizing new members became a top priority and new contracts eliminated the tier-system of pay grades and had real enforcement teeth. The luxury Lincolns were sold off, business agents were fired and the once-bloated staff salaries were slashed—with future raises tied to bargaining successes at UPS and other Teamster contracts.

It has been a bumpy ride for 10 long years but this new era has meant a New Deal for Local 705's 20,000-plus Teamster men and women and their families. These pages will remind you how we got there in your crafts and barns, and how financial vigor and dignity were restored to one of the greatest local unions in the entire nation.

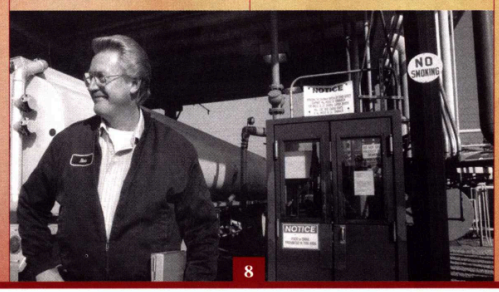


Photo by Earl Dotter

We've Organized for Local 705's Future

10th Anniversary
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 705

It's hard to overstate the importance of the Local 705 organizing program.

As other unions ignore this essential job, the ranks of the labor movement continue to shrink—and with it, so do the middle-class economic benefits which hallmark the American dream.

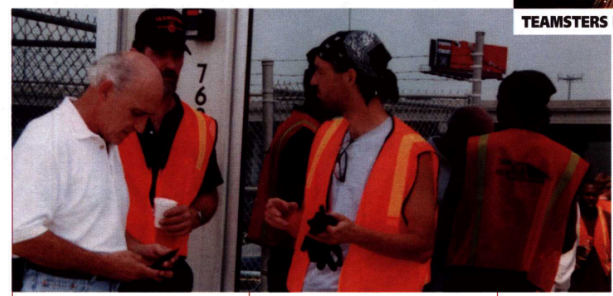
Local 705's organizing efforts rank among the most successful of any local or national union in the country, and that success means real security for the new members we enroll, as well as our current members.

Jerry Zero's first big test came in 1993, at the KMart distribution center in Manteno (see page 20 for details). The KMart victory showed that a real commitment to organizing could get the job done.

There is no higher priority for the Local 705 reform team today than organizing—followed by the delivering of solid contracts to new members. That's the best way for us to replenish our losses from retirements and corporate consolidations—and to grow in size and influence as well.

We've learned that organizing is the best hope for our Local to deliver its members economic justice—and eventually social justice.

The more that we can add to our Local 705 membership rolls, the more difficult it will be for the employers to play Local 705 members off against non-union workers during negotiations. Bolstering our Local 705 organizing staff as well as our rank-and-file volunteer organizers has been fundamental not only to our victories in recent years but to our lifeblood into this new century.



Bringing Rail workers back under union protection has been one of organizer Frank Fosco's (far left) major goals.

"Don't Mourn, Organize!"

Nearly 5,000 New Members

Victories in 13 of 17 NLRB Certified Elections

Let's not kid ourselves—every day we're up against wily and well-financed corporate managers determined to keep their employees out of the ranks of Local 705 membership.

Ever since the years of trucking industry deregulation and the Reagan Administration, union busters have brandished a wide variety of tools to try to keep organized labor out of the barns—including the hiring of professional consultants. Almost all of them have held mandatory, closed-door meetings with employees to attack workers' unions.

Supervisors in the barns have been trained in how to resist Local 705 and most of them distribute literature attacking unions. About half of them threaten to eliminate all workers' jobs if they decide to join a union, and some employees have been fired for helping other workers join a union.

Nonetheless, we took to heart Mother Jones's solid advice of "Don't mourn—organize !!" and by 1996 we could proudly point to 2,500 new members. Within two years Local 705 reported victories in 13 out of 17 NLRB certified elections.

By 1997 our revitalized stewards program teamed up with rank-and-filers to conduct hard-hitting, disciplined Volunteer Organizing Committee (VOC) campaigns aimed at tank haulers and others. This program recorded an astonishing 90 percent success rate—almost unheard of in the field of organizing.

As Dr. Robert Bruno observes in his new book "Reforming the Chicago Teamsters," it soon became clear that "by every imaginable standard, contracts negotiated by the reform leadership were significantly superior to the ones they preceded."

The Organizing Dept. and the VOC teams also were successful at North American Glass, Qualix, Kraft Foods, QTS rail yards (BN/SF) and the H&M rail yards, and in the air freight industry where we are pushing to organize DHL, the air freight company intending to purchase Airborne freight.

Local 705 has grown by nearly 50 percent since the reform movement took charge. We didn't mourn—we organized.

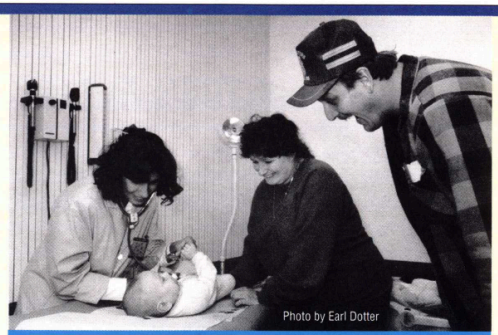


Photo by Earl Dotter

Restored Vigor to Our Health & Welfare

If you don't think the story about the Local 705 Health & Welfare Fund is an impressive one, then you haven't been reading the newspapers. Health care co-pays are increasing everywhere, some so large they eat up pay raises. In fact, some unions and union locals (even some Teamster locals in our own Joint Council) have had to accept wage freezes and move any monetary increases into their H&W Funds.

Local 705, however, now has one of the strongest Funds in the country, with a health care plan second to none. But it wasn't always that way.

Ligurotis, attorney Carmell and the rest of their gang had pillaged the Health & Welfare Fund to the same extent they had looted the Pension Fund. Kick-backs, a self-enriching health-test-referral system and grossly padded billings had nearly driven the Health & Welfare Fund broke. By 1993 it was losing $6 million annually.

If the schemes had been allowed to persist, our members soon would have faced the same painful health-care Hobson's choices that so many of their fellow Americans confront nearly every day.

As the H&W Fund's operating account hemorrhaged to below $20 million, we discovered that the Fund also had been the victim of a financial scam perpetrated by the doctor who ran the Local 705 Medical Clinic.

Dr. William Dalessandro (chosen by the Ligurotis executive board) employed a system of referrals (mainly for blood tests) to steer patients to other medical services where he owned a major interest. In addition to Dr. Dalessandro's receiving $150,000 per year for only two days a week at the Local 705 clinic, his other entities charged the H&W Fund additional hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The investigation also turned up evidence of false and spurious billings for health-care work either not performed at all or performed by someone else who also was paid. Moreover, Dalessandro was paid $280,000 by the St. Joseph Hospital over four years to refer patients there and for "utilization reviews" for which there was no evidence of performance (even though he was being paid as head of the clinic to perform them himself).

Our lawsuit soon restored millions of dollars to the H&W Fund in 1995 from these thefts.

The Medical Clinic itself was a hapless financial loser. While we were determined to sell it and keep it open for the 4,000 or so members who still used it, our actuarial experts informed us that the Clinic would need to service between 30,000 to 50,000 people each year before it could break even financially.

Most Local 705 members repeatedly told us that they wanted a more comprehensive health care plan, allowing them to choose their own physicians closer to where they lived.

So by early 1998, we were able to turn things around and nurture the H&W Fund back to health in terms of nearly $60 million in operating funds and providing our members Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage at 225 hospitals with more than 24,000 doctors. We initially negotiated a respectable 90/10 arrangement with Blue Cross (when other trade unions were going to weekly co-pays) and pushed for further membership growth.

By January, 1999, the contribution ratio was even further improved to 95/5, with the individual member annual deductible slashed down to $100 per year.

Health care has become a crucial concern for all Teamster families and there have been steady improvements in initial eligibility (from the former three months down to only one month on the job); coverage for our dependents (up to age 19—and age 23 for fulltime students); lifetime maximum benefits (from the former $500,00 to the current $3 million); deductibles (down from the old $700 per family to $300 per family and $100 for individuals); and out-of-pocket maximums (down to only $1,000 from the old annual level of $2,500).

Weekly disability payments have been raised to $275 per week. There has been a 50 percent increase in death benefits (now $30,000). In terms of vision care, there is $200 a year for eye exams and improved coverage for frames and lenses.

And in the vital area of prescription drugs, Local 705 members and their families can go to thousands of retail pharmacies, including all major drug stores and chain stores nationwide—compared to the old network of only two chain stores. Retail costs for drugs have been lowered from 20 percent to only $10 per generic drug or $25 for a name-brand drug per month.

Local 705, however, now has one of the strongest Funds in the country, with a health care plan second to none. But it wasn't always that way.

Health-care co-pays also have been eliminated entirely for many of our public sector members working in the western Chicago suburbs. And Local 705 retirees who still receive health care from the H&W Fund now benefit from a 50 percent increase in the lifetime maximum coverage—it has been hiked to $300,000 for each pensioneer's lifetime.

One of our top priorities for the future is to avoid co-pays in the H&W Fund, just as we have done so for the past five years with UPS and under the MCLAC agreement. Co-pays are a huge burden for the average rank-and-filer with a spouse and kids and they must continue to be blocked in the future.

No More Puny Patchwork of Pensions

We've all read the stories. A lifetime of work and loyalty goes down the drain as pension funds stagnate or collapse through neglect, indifference and corruption. Hardly a day goes by without hearing of thousands of workers—union as well as non-union—whose retirement dreams go up in smoke.

Ten years ago, that was the story of Local 705. But not anymore.

One of the best "before and after" success stories to be told about reform is the extraordinary turnaround in the Local 705 Pension Fund. The new leaders uncovered years of non-existent employer contributions, corruption and misuse of Pension Fund money—above and beyond bonehead investments in the bond market. This was not just embarrassing, it was outrageous. Hard-working Teamsters faced retirements of totally unnecessary economic suffering. It was just one more crisis which had to be remedied—almost immediately.

And so it was. The Local 705 Pension fund is now $1 billion-plus strong. While other workers see benefits disappear, Local 705 participants have seen steady increases ever since the reform team took over. Even in a shrinking economy and a shaky stock market, Local 705 members can expect more improvements in the near future.

"I expect that our Fund actuaries will report soon on an acceptable plan to increase UPS pension benefits," said lead Union Pension Fund Trustee Gerald Zero. "And I certainly hope to continue the trend of Freight, Cartage and other Teamsters crafts as members' negotiated contributions kick in and result in pension increases."

Secretary-Treasurer Zero also sits on Local 705's joint labor-management Pension Fund board and, as reported below, has been the steady hand that righted the foundering ship following 1993.

Before reform, the Local's contracts were a patchwork of different company payments into the Pension Fund. Some companies were paying as little as $42 per week, while others were contributing more than twice as much. Contributions to the plan are now universally set by contractural terms. And monthly pension contributions as well as benefits became commonplace after 1994.

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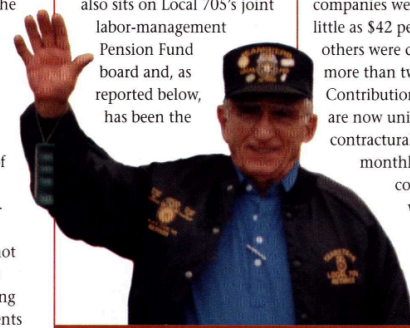


COMPARING PENSION RATES

	Pre-Trusteeship Rates	Current Rates
25 years	$1500/mo	$2500 / month
26 years	$1500/mo	$2600/mo
27 years	$1500/mo	$2700/mo
28 years	$1500/mo	$2800/mo
29 years	$1500/mo	$2900/mo
30 years	$2000/mo	$3000
+ years	no more	+ $100/mo for each add'l yr (w/ no cap)

Pensions

(continued from page 11)

Investigations by our attorneys over 20 months prompted the filing of a racketeering and corruption lawsuit against the Ligurotis Executive Board officers which soon resulted in the return of $13.5 million to Local 705 as compensation for the looting of the Pension Fund and other member resources. The former officers' schemes included a $2 million ritzy restaurant in Teamster City, fraudulent billing by the doctor who ran the Teamster medical clinic, a $25,000 bribe of the former Local 705 Secretary-Treasurer by the Amerford air freight company, and the Pension Fund's own lawyer's active assistance in the looting of the Fund.

By mid-1997, the eight Pension Fund trustees had adopted the new policy of five-year vesting required by law — eliminating the old 10-year requirement for Fund participants. This was effective for members who had earned one year of vesting service (22 weeks of contributions).

Also in 1997, much-deserved pension increases for freight and cartage drivers were abruptly blocked by the Fund's four employer trustees —despite the positive recommendations of the Fund's actuarial experts at the Segal Company. All we had demanded was a scale of hikes ranging from $2,000 per month after 25 years up to $2,500 per month for 30 years of duty.

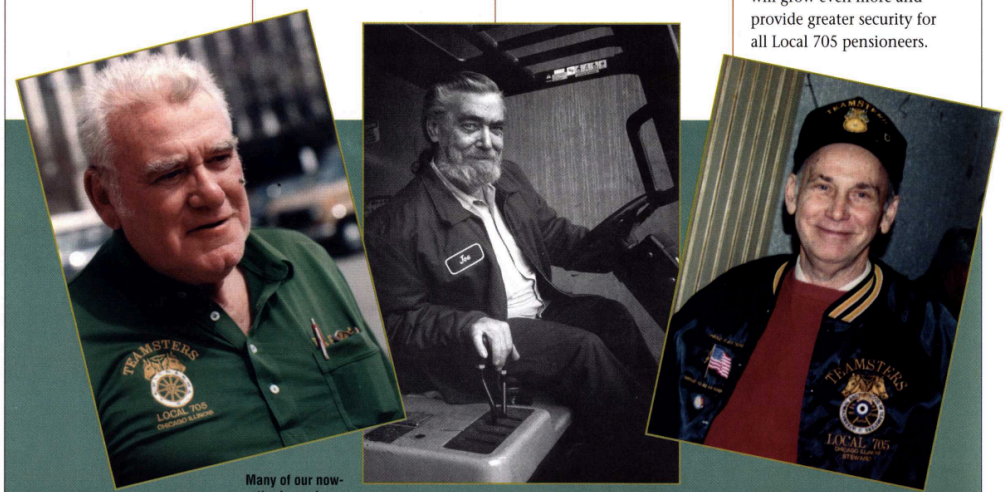
The Local 705 Pension fund is now $1 billion-plus strong. While other workers see benefits disappear, Local 705 participants have seen steady increases ever since the reform team took over.

After the four corporate trustees voted against our long-overdue pension increases, we printed their business telephone and FAX numbers in our UPDATE newsletter—and before the next newsletter could be printed, all four trustees decided to switch their votes in favor of the pension increases.

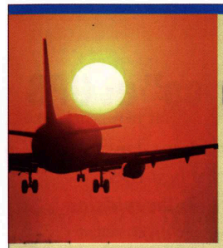
Further accomplishments in the Fund include doubling the level of 30-and-out pensions to $3,000 a month and hiking the 25-and-out monthly pensions to new levels.

Under the direction of the reform officers, the Fund's operations were computerized and strengthened with further modernization, while Fund communications with all Local 705 members were also improved.

Our Pension Fund already pays more than the Central States Pension Fund and we're expecting that with careful, prudent investments the fund will grow even more and provide greater security for all Local 705 pensioneers.



Many of our now-retired members fought hard for the gains that have been made since 1993.



Our Loftiest Success Stories

The workers in air freight and related crafts have been a crucial element of the Local 705 success story and are critical to our future.

By mid-1999 our members at Airborne readily voted to ratify the best Airborne contract in the nation, far surpasssing the one nationally negotiated earlier. They rejected Airborne's first "final offer" and told their Local 705 negotiators to stay at the table.

The end result of this unity was a contract which would pay greater than $2 more per hour than the national Airborne agreement, along with retroactive paychecks of up to $3,000 per member.

Joe Cerillo is emblematic of the 698 air freight workers at Airborne who are members of Local 705. He works as a dock hand and delivery truck driver out of Airborne's Lisle facility (Airborne has four other delivery centers: downtown on Harrison Street, near Midway Airport, in Schaumburg near O'Hare Airport and in Libertyville for the far northwest suburbs).

Nearly a 20-year veteran driver, Cerillo started with Airborne at the age of 25. "In the 1980s, we air freight drivers were like nothing to the leadership of Local 705," Cerillo recalls. "The long-haul Freight drivers were the big deal to Ligurotis and his staff. There were only 83 of us—and naturally we didn't care much about the union."

A dramatic turnaround occurred in the mid-90's, says Cerillo, as Airborne added hundreds of new drivers and dockworkers—and Teamster membership swiftly grew to well over 500 at the five facilities. "Mark Postilion and Mike Colgan did a great job of educating the members and getting them more focused on union and workplace issues," Cerillo says.

"In the 1980s, we air freight drivers were like nothing to the leadership of Local 705. The long-haul Freight drivers were the big deal to Ligurotis and his staff."

–Joe Cerillo

Airborne had insisted that they needed to rely on part-time workers in order to compete with Fed Ex and UPS. "I voted against that," says Cerillo—and mainly as a consequence of Local 705 unity, part-timers are no longer a major issue at Airborne in Chicago.

Cerillo now makes about $22.00 per hour delivering packages in the city's western suburbs and is pleased that Local 705 has been successful in winning decent pensions for the Airborne workers. "Now it's fully $3,000 a month after 30-and-out," Cerillo points out, "with another $100 each month for each year over 30.

"Neither snow nor rain..." Airborne drivers like Ricardo Villafuerta make sure the packages get delivered.

"Not only can I survive on that, but I intend to send each of my three boys to college," adds the veteran Airborne driver—especially if the three young athletes can land athletic scholarships!

The Big Turnaround at Emery

Back in early 1999, Local negotiators were able to improve worklife for dozens of Emery Air Freight members by eliminating the salary-tier system that had been created several years earlier when Emery, Purolator and C.F. merged air freight operations.

Although their contract expires next year, the full-time Emery tractor-trailer drivers have earned a top rate of $20.68 per hour. Emery also agreed to top-rate pension contributions after the members had rejected two previous management proposals.

The Emery experience was a prime example of how Local 705's new philosophy of bringing rank-and-file members to the bargaining table with union negotiators makes for effective and productive teamwork. Our team also won improved vacation benefits, retiree health care and leave-of-absence language.

An impressive $11,383 in back pay was won early in 1999 for Emery employee David Harper who works out of Bensenville at O'Hare. While Harper had been out on long-term sick leave, management tried to block payment of his sick pay.

Local 705 took the case to the grievance board, where it deadlocked. But Emery soon realized that it had a weak case for arbitration and decided to settle.

UPStaging "Part-Time America" at UPS

"Jim Hoffa and the Teamsters have done a great job. They bargained the best UPS contract ever—and they did it in the middle of George Bush's economic recession."

—AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka on the historic 2002 UPS contract

Conditions are a lot better now, but like everything else a decade ago, the new leadership was confronted with absolute chaos at UPS when they took control.

Probably the worst ongoing problem created by the Ligurotis gang was their agreement to allow the huge CACH facility to be staffed almost exclusively with low-wage part-time workers who had no chance for advancement.

Of course, repesentation was also pathetic, with only four "business agents" and 20 stewards to service thousands of members. Jerry Zero and his new team doubled the staff serving UPS and increased the stewards' force almost ten-fold.

Substantial gains have been achieved, but the struggle to right the Ligurotis wrongs on part-time work will pre-occupy Local 705 for the foreseeable future.

We have not forgotten that in the sweltering summer of 1997, when few commentators thought it possible, the Teamsters stunned the nation by shutting down the United Parcel Service Company.

The national strike lasted 17 days and ended in a win for the union. As Local 705's biographer Dr. Robert Bruno writes "It was hailed at the time as one of labor's biggest victories in 40 years....In Chicago, Local 705 fought its own victorious battle with UPS and kept the firm's package cars garaged one week longer than anywhere else in the nation."

One of the biggest issues that humid August six years ago was the United Parcel Service's corporate philosophy that much of their operations could be conducted by part-timers despite the massive turnover rates of dissatisfied workers.

Then and now, Local 705's reform leadership has opposed this notion of "Part-time America" and has continued to bargain for more full-time jobs at UPS. In 1997 we won 600 new full-time jobs—hundreds more than any other Teamsters Local—with that 20 percent increase nearly doubling the national average increase of 12 percent new full-time UPS job promises.

Significant progress was made during that historic strike—which cost UPS an estimated $800 million before they stopped bluffing and folded their hand—and the months that followed. In addition to the 20 percent more full-time jobs for its part-timers in Local 705 over the life of the contract, UPS also agreed to substantial pay increases for part-timers for the first time in 15 years.

"[The UPS Strike] was hailed at the time as one of labor's biggest victories in 40 years....In Chicago, Local 705 fought its own victorious battle with UPS."

–Dr. Robert Bruno

While 500 additional new full-time jobs were won in the 2002 contract, there is more work to be done. UPS still seems to be a corporation which cares more about its clients' packages than its own employees.

Behind the millions of "brown" dollars they spend on glitzy TV and print ads remains the usual wake of broken promises and outright violations of the national UPS agreement—and the even better contract negotiated by Local 705 in 1997 and again in 2002.

Despite four straight years of record-breaking income and profits, UPS tried to conduct last year's contract negotiations within the context of a nationwide economic recession. In other words, they tried to poor-mouth us—emphasizing all the pressure and lost business being inflicted by their competition.

Above and beyond the 2002 UPS national agreement, Local 705 delivered more for its UPS members in the Chicago area. Negotiators achieved more Teamster jobs inside the CACH hub, new pension gains for part-timers, improved health care and prescription drug cards for part-timers. We also ended inside subcontracting at UPS Chicago operations creating 500 new Local 705 part-time jobs.

Our members also won improved language on layoff procedures, as well as a termination of subcontracting work inside the hubs. UPS pensions also have markedly improved; 30-year veterans now will receive $3,000 per month (plus $100 monthly for each year over 30) while 25-year veterans who in 1993 were receiving $2,300 monthly now will receive $2,500 to add to their monthly Social Security checks.

Local 705 Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Zero and staffer Tom Nightwine were named to the UPS Bargaining Committee for the national contract. They made sure that a thorny problem plaguing 30 UPS air combination workers at O'Hare Airport (resulting from UPS applying a misguided 1997 air contract arbitration ruling in Texas to the O'Hare combo workers and costing each worker as much as $50,000 over the years) was taken care of via the new national contract.

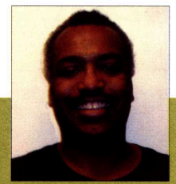
"For four years, we were getting royally screwed by that lousy Texas arbitration decision—with UPS paying us $1.50 an hour less than the workers under the hub contract," said UPS combo worker Michael Stokes. "UPS hid under that Texas arbitration ruling—which never would have happened in Chicago where Local 705 could have pitched in for us."

But Jerry and Tom made it their priority to get the money we were due," Stokes continued, "and not long ago I received my back-pay check for many thousands of dollars. That goes into the college education fund for our two daughters."

At UPS, full-timers still want better wages, greater pension contributions, no health-care co-pays, regular cost-of-living increases and more vacation & leave time. Part-timers still need more full-time jobs, Teamster pensions, better wages and improved bidding rights.

UPS remains a huge part of what reform at Local 705 is all about—and we will keep the pressure on UPS managers at Jefferson, at the CACH facility and throughout the greater Chicago area. We will stop the managers from performing union work and we will arbitrate our demand for the guaranteed full-time jobs we have earned, if we have to.

UNITE President Bruce Raynor also praised Teamster President Jim Hoffa's job on the UPS contract at the July 2003 national kick-off of the joint Teamster/ UNITE drive to organize the work uniform giant Cintas.



Michael B. Thomas, 49, has been a part-time pre-load UPS worker for 25 years. He believes that "things have improved markedly over the past decade since reform took hold — especially on racial issues.

"As an African-American, 15 or 20 years ago you didn't even feel physically safe going into the union hall. Local 705 still has its factions, and there is always room for improvement, but at least the election slates now reach out to all of 705's ethnic groups."

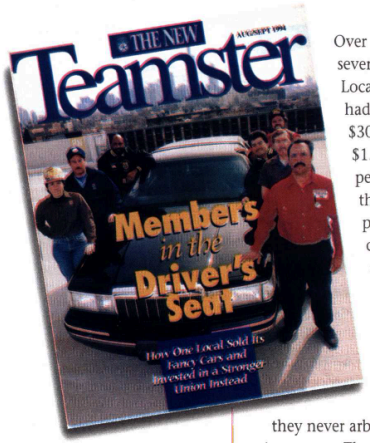
"In the old days, it was unspoken that you were not welcome at Local 705 — that you simply had no business being there," says Thomas. "Now you can put a name to staffers' faces and we each know someone from the union who can help with work problems.

"Prior to reform, there were no open mikes at the meetings and you didn't feel part of any union — you felt as if your dues were going for naught," Mike adds. "If you had a grievance, the standard phrase from any Ligurotis business agent was 'Just be glad you've got a job.'"

"We're starting to look much more like a democratic, functioning union," he concludes.

—Michael B. Thomas

Finances In Free-Fall Until '93 Reform



Ousted Secretary-Treasurer Danny Ligurotis had wreaked as much havoc with Local 705's finances as he had with the Funds. Even though it was 10 long years ago, Ligurotis's annual salary had swollen to more than $230,000. Meanwhile, Vice President Louis Esposito had been drawing $85,000-a-year at age 81—and he hadn't attended a Local 705 meeting in over a year.

The newly-appointed leadership also discovered that employers had been getting a free ride for years. Over the previous seven years, the Local's treasury had lost from $300,000 to $1.2 million per year from the non-payment of dues—amounting to about $4.5 million overall!

"No wonder they never arbitrated any grievances.... The Local was bleeding red ink," one union leader said at the time. And that had to be stopped.

The first step was to restructure the Local 705 staff. Many staffers were well-meaning, but had never been trained as Union Reps. Most of them just had to go. "With all the enormous problems we faced," Union Trustee Zero remarked, "we just didn't have the luxury of being patient. We owed the members strong, qualified representation—people who could hit the ground running and get the job done."

Many new, well-trained staff were hired. They joined the Reps that stayed on, but staffing levels were cut by 30%, with everyone expected to carry a heavier load of members to serve. Union-bought autos (many of them luxury Lincolns) were sold—replaced with personal-car allowances which saved the Local $75,000 per year.

Union Rep salaries (and those of the new Executive Board who were elected in 1995) were slashed to acceptable levels (see chart, top right). Additionally, future staff and Executive Board wage increases would be tied to raises received by the members from Freight and UPS negotiations. Total staff and Executive Board salaries still are lower today than they were 10 years ago—even though the cost-of-living has risen 22%.

Another $160,000 per year was saved by canceling the extravagant year-end parties which feted corporate big-wigs, but barred rank-and-file Teamsters. The "party time" era at Local 705 was over.

Outside legal fees also were slashed (and the Ligurotis crew's lap-dog attorney Sherman Carmell was fired, along with the see-no-evil accountants who had muffled the Executive Board's corrupt misdeeds and made a $1.4 million "accounting error" we unearthed in 1994). Lawsuits were filed against the whole lot of them, winning prompt settlements and eventually reaping many millions of dollars for the Local 705 Funds as recompense for the racketeering, embezzlement, negligence and theft.

Over the previous seven years, the Local's treasury had lost from $300,000 to $1.2 million per year from the non-payment of dues—amounting to about $4.5 million overall!

The settlement with the Aetna Insurance Company in 1995, for example, recovered a neat $13.5 million to restore some health to the looted Health & Welfare Fund as well as the Pension Fund.

At least one employer, the Amerford air freight firm operating at Chicago's O'Hare Airport and New York's Kennedy Airport, had tried to buy "labor peace" by bribing Ligurotis with a $25,000 "contribution" to his 1991 campaign for national IBT office. Local 705 had more than 500 contracts to administer and far too many of them were sweetheart deals plagued with non-enforcement and under-the-table concessions.

After the union treasury was restored to operating in the black, the savings were poured into membership services and education. Rank-and-file Local 705 members were hired to fill a number of the new Union Rep jobs and a new office was opened to improve union accessibility for our growing membership at KMart in Kankakee.

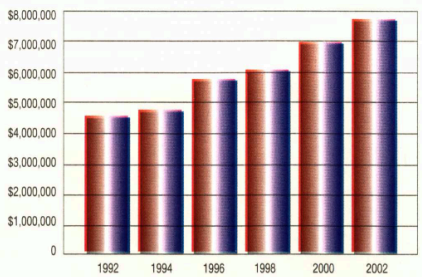
By 1996, the Executive Board's salaries totaled less than $400,000, the Secretary-Treasurer's pay had been cut to $85,000 and the dozens of Local 705 staffers' salaries totaled only $2,486,434. Even with inflation and nominal pay increases, last year (2002) the Board and staff salaries totaled only $3,361,638 compared to the bloated $5 million-plus (including the outlandish $230,380 paid to Secretary-Treasurer Danny Ligurotis) the looter leadership awarded itself in 1992.

Other internal financial reforms included termination of the $25,000 sugar-plum severance payments made to Ligurotis favorites when they departed.

In the sorry era in which Local officers were more interested in providing "labor peace" than tough contracts which maximized wages and benefits for the rank-and-file members, the Local's strike fund also had been neglected. The reform team nurtured it back to health from a nearly comatose financial state (a mere $3,014 in September of 1996) with, for example, monthly injections averaging nearly $67,000 over the ensuing half year. Today the strike fund, even after the great UPS strike of August, 1997 (in which strike fund payments exceeding $500,000 were alloted), stands at a vigorous $1.4 million (as of December 31st, 2002).

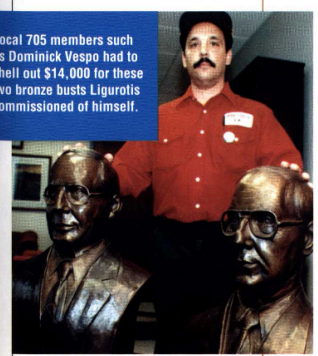
Dues revenue (and therefore membership services) has been increasing steadily during the 10 years of reform mainly because more workers are joining forces with Local 705—especially in the harsh economic times at the start of this decade.

Dues Revenue

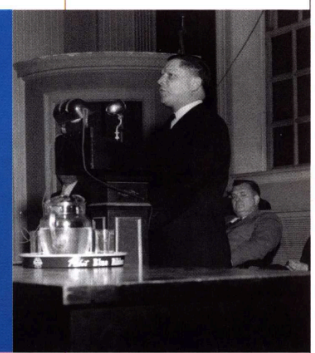


Bloated Staff Salaries Slashed

Total staff and Executive Board salaries are still lower today than they were 10 years ago—even though the cost-of-living has risen 22%.



Local 705 members such as Dominick Vespo had to shell out $14,000 for these two bronze busts Ligurotis commissioned of himself.



Back in 1958, IBT President James R. Hoffa traveled to Chicago and addressed leaders and members of Local 705, asking them to give him the authority to negotiate their freight drivers' working conditions as part of Hoffa's NMFA. The proudly independent Local 705 graciously declined the honor...and has done so ever since.

Photo from Local 705 archives.

Solidarity Delivers In the Suburbs

Chicago's sleepy near-western and southern suburbs? Bedroom communities where civil service and civil behavior blend into progressive harmony and workplace accord?

Forget it! The municipal managers and politicians running several of Chicago's oldest suburbs had shown themselves to be small-minded weasels who value a nickel here and a dime there much more than labor rights or the security and dignity of their own municipal employees.

For years, they were able to get away with it because Ligurotis and his crew had ignored the Municipal members. Many Municipal 705 Teamsters were earning several dollars per hour below those doing similar work in other government units, and their contract language and rights needed a major overhaul.

Months of protracted, often hostile negotiations took place in the early days following the ejection of the Ligurotis gang to bring the members up to acceptable standards. It was a long series of battles, but ultimately, the new leadership was successful.

Local 705 made a positive impact down south at the Thorn Creek Sanitary District, which operates a huge waste water treatment plant serving various industries and the affluent communities of Chicago Heights, Homewood, Steger, Crete and South Chicago Heights. The facility pumps 11 million gallons of water every day of the year and our members there range from eight maintenance men and six operators to the two lab technicians.

As always though, political managers are just like the rest of management—and every few years a new round of attacks hit the Teamsters who clean the community streets, pick up the garbage and help make our drinking water safe.

Case in point: the Village of Oak Park. During the past year, municipal administrators have managed to enrage every labor union they deal with, starting with Local 705. They fired three 705 members on flimsy evidence and have ignored the overtime provisions in the contract. Five other local unions have similar complaints.

Local 705 has been arbitrating all the contract violations—and we got involved in this year's Oak Park municipal elections, mobilizing our members and their relatives there.

In Maywood, the news was also not that great. After agreeing to a new three-year contract with decent wage increases, the Maywood Village Board stalled with bogus issues for a full year. Our members there did not receive their back pay (as much as $2,500 per worker) until last January.

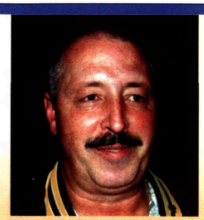
Actual good news has been coming out of Berwyn, where our members reached an excellent three-year agreement with wage increases of 14 percent over those years and an additional vacation day and sick day.

Late in 2001, Local 705 municipal workers in Bellwood experienced some contract disappointments after a prior mayor of Bellwood hired a notorious anti-union law firm which usually tries to bring negotiations to an impasse. For 30 months Bellwood was pushing unreasonable and insulting give-back demands to create divisions among our members. The new mayor, Frank Pasquale, has promised to be more labor-friendly and so far, most of his changes have been positive.

Back south at the Sanitary District, the lead negotiator for Local 705 had referred to Thorn Creek as "the most recalcitrant, obstructionist municipal government body we've dealt with at this Local." Thorn Creek management had improperly declared an impasse (and tried to impose a lousy contract on the workers) during contract negotiations and the Illinois Public Employee Labor Relations Board had to order them back to the table.

"You want to talk about unfair?" bargaining committee member Jim McKee said at the time. "All our members work 10-or-12 hour shifts, yet management is trying to impose a contract that only pays eight hours for holiday pay."

Village of Bellwood



Local 705 member Jim McKee reports that "In the old days before 1995, the Teamster business agents would tell us to shut up at contract time—they basically ran us, not the other way around. But now it's a whole new ballgame and the Local 705 union reps actually help us get what we deserve."

In the old days, a contract would show up as a done deal and the BA would tell the 16 members "This is what you get—live with it," according to McKee.

705 Shakes & Bakes—and Feeds Chicago

Local 705's hundreds of proud food drivers have always worked very hard for their money. And the city could not do business—could not feed itself—without them.

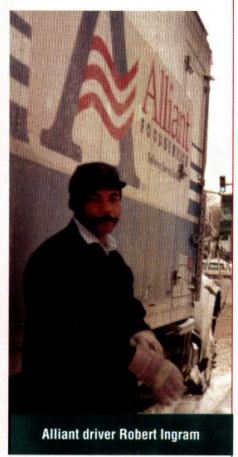
These men and women deliver all the food and supplies not only to Chicago's convenience stores, gas stations and neighborhood Mom & Pop stores, but also to the big chain restaurants such as Bennigans and TGIF's and Subway shops, to the fancy hotels from the Drake and the Ritz-Carlton to the Grant Park Hilton, to the inner Loop restaurants, even the city's hospitals and health centers.

"Back in the old days, our food drivers were faced with at least three different wage scales and weekly contributions to the Pension Fund were stuck at $76," reports Union Rep Jimmy Sylvester. "Now that has been nearly doubled to $137 per week. Health & Welfare contributions have reached $164 weekly."

Local 705 has organized the truck drivers at four major food distributors, including Dearborn Wholesalers, U.S. Foods, Alliant Foods and Carps-Bake, a company which brings the basic supplies to nearly all the bakeries in Chicago.

"Under Ligurotis, we never saw the union or got help. Now, our Union Rep is always there when we need him—and the grievance procedure really works."

–John Rutherford, Judge & Dolph driver


Alliant driver Robert Ingram

Sylvester says that U.S Foods was organized in 1995 and Local 705 now represents about 85 drivers there. Dearborn Wholesalers has 68 drivers downtown with another 48 at their operations out of Glendale Heights, where those drivers are being paid $20.70 per hour. Most of the other drivers are now getting $19.36 per hour and their contract is up.

"Back before the trusteeship, there simply were no grievances from our food drivers," Sylvester recalls. "But once the Local let it be known that grievances and arbitrations would be pursued vigorously, the members came forward, nearly 100 of them by 1996."

Judge & Dolph driver Dan Sponagel

At Chicago's newly renovated and expanded Midway Airport, the lengthy struggle for a fair contract with Flying Foods Inc. ended successfully when the drivers for the airplane food service provider unanimously ratified their first-ever Teamster contract. The Local 705 organizing team had well prepared the drivers to be ready for the delay-and-deny curve-balls management would eventually throw them.

The Flying Foods drivers won retroactive wage increases of as much as 50 percent over the three-year contract (starting in March, 2000) along with six paid holidays (with double-time pay for any members required to work on a holiday).

A strong Teamster grievance procedure instituted at Flying Foods began landing solid grievance victories for these new Local 705 members almost immediately.

Liquor's Quicker

With its 75-mile radius of jurisdiction outwards from downtown Chicago, about 150 Local 705 truck drivers deliver all of the wine and liquor sold or served in north-eastern Illinois.

That covers countless consumers in scores of thousands of restaurants, groceries, bar, taverns and night clubs which receive all their booze (with the exception of beer) from Chicago Teamsters through the two distributorships of Judge & Dolph (owned by the well-known Bill Wirtz) and the new Southern Wine & Spirits of Illinois (a merger of Romano and Pacific Wine).

"As the distillers have consolidated over the years, so have the distributors," points out 705 Contract Negotiator Jim Lyons, "There used to be perhaps 250 Chicago liquor drivers, but the industry has contracted."

KMart Is Finally Our Blue-Light Special

"True grit"...it used to be that only John Wayne and hard-hit, dusty old cowpokes like Gus Call from "Lonesome Dove" had the dogged determination that makes up "true grit". But true grit showed up again a decade ago in Kankakee, Illinois, of all places—and it never went away.

That's where the several hundred workers at KMart's sprawling warehouse distribution center in Manteno, IL, became poster children/victims of the union busters, con artists, stallsters, espionage perps, and labor law violators that fleshed out the rogues' gallery of KMart labor relations. It was also the first big test of the new Local 705's commitment to organizing as an important priority.

KMart remains a company which, of course, proved that it would rather go bankrupt than to treat its own employees fairly or decently. A company which infiltrated its own workforce with Pinkertons who ratted on the pro-union workers—a blunder which cost them $47,600 in fines when the NLRB ruled against them in mid-1997. Just take a look at KMart's sordid history with its 450 workers in the Kankakee area:

- **July, 1993**—warehouse workers in the Manteno facility voted for Local 705 representation. But for years they were forced to battle the company's smarmy tactics to delay contract negotiations.
- **May, 1997** — following a lawsuit filed jointly by Local 705 and 55 individual members, KMart admited to hiring Confidential Investigative Consultants to infiltrate the workforce and spy on the private lives of their "fellow" KMart employees. CIC settled the suit out of court and the NLRB issued complaints against KMart and ordered the company to post notices that it would cease using private detectives to intimidate KMart employees from exercizing their rights to organize and collectively bargain with their employer. The Board fined the company $47,600 for its illegal actions. In addition, KMart also ended up paying $16,000 in lost wages to an openly pro-union employee, Aaron Bunnell, who had been terminated under flimsy circumstances.
- **April, 1999** — In a ploy aimed at dividing the K-Mart employees, management put forward its lame contract proposal for a vote, counting on a close vote to fracture union solidarity. The final tally turned out to be 502-to-11 rejecting the bogus contract offer.
- **September, 1999** — KMart workers voted 320-to-101 to ratify their first Teamster contract, securing wage increases, doubling of paid sick-leave, an immediate $1-per-hour pay raise for clericals and a strong grievance procedure.
- **March, 2000** — KMart steward Joe Boyd addressed a rally of Kankakee area Local 705 members and reminded them that "We wouldn't have gotten our first contract without the help of the Teamsters in construction. KMart's expansion plans had to go through them, and they put big-time pressure on the company to settle."
- **October, 2001** — two KMart members returned to their jobs after Local 705 went to arbitration on their behalf and won a pair of wrongful-discharge cases, including back pay and benefits.
- **August 22, 2002** — After rewarding two KMart top executives who drove the company into bankruptcy with retirement golden parachutes amounting to $39 million, KMart tried to decertify Local 705 at the Manteno warehouse. But the vote against de-cert came in at 211-to-166 — a margin seven times greater than the original pro-union vote in July, 1993.

Talaine Jacob, an unloader in receiving, stated that a union contract makes all the difference when a company is in bankruptcy. "I feel secure because I know the union is fighting for us and that the contract will give us protection," she said.

Just days before the de-cert vote, Teamster reps and members gained access to the warehouse to leaflet workers on the issues. When they were arrested, it became a scene right out of "Norma Rae", with workers banging on windows and cheering "Union YES! Union YES!" But now it's time to improve the contract.

Turning the other cheek on the bankrupt corporation, Union Rep Jeff Dexter declared that "We'll help KMart get back on its feet, but our members must have a voice in the process. The Teamsters aren't going anywhere. It's time KMart listens up."

10th Anniversary
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 705

Getting Grievous About Arbitrations

You can tell a lot about the leadership of a Local union by how far it's willing to stick its neck out on its members' grievances and successfully arbitrating them—even through the sticky wickets of the National Labor Relations Board.

Back before the trusteeship, under the regime of Danny Ligurotis & The Old Guard (sounds like a grunge rock band, doesn't it ?), Local 705 was taking fewer than four cases per year to arbitration. Back then, deadlocked cases were almost never pursued and members were kept in the dark.

Corporate managers who know that a union is unlikely to push on to arbitration sense that it's open season on the rank-and-file workers. That's one reason why Local 705's arbitration rates have skyrocketed.

While a lot of arbitration can get expensive for a Local (at $2,500 per case), we began to negotiate "loser pays" clauses into our new contracts so we no longer have to pay equally with management for the cases which go to arbitration. Now we don't have to pay a dime for the cases we do win—and management tends to settle out of court if their case has any weaknesses.

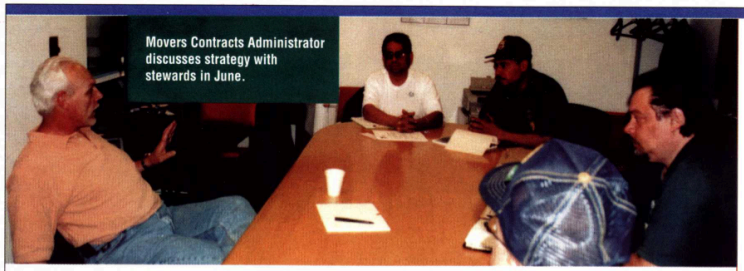
Another significant improvement in contract language is the basic American legal principle known as "innocent until proven guilty." In the bad old days, the opposite was true—and we believe that this new language (which allows members to remain on the job while their case is being considered) has already saved several thousand jobs among the UPS, Freight and MCLAC contracts alone.

Under our new approach to truly representing our members via vigorous arbitration, we started bringing home the bacon just as soon as the griddle was hot. In the first five years following the trusteeship, Local 705 won nearly $2 million for its members through grievance and arbitration procedures.

That $2 million is greater than what all the other Teamster Locals in the state of Illinois won for their 140,000 members in twice as many (10) years. In the Local 705 moving division alone, we racked up more than $200,000 in awards through the NLRB.

Some of the biggest arbitration victories have involved the United Parcel Service Company. Late in 1998, UPS package car driver Dennis Minaglia (pictured at left) was awarded two-years' back pay totaling $109,000 after an arbitrator overruled his discharge once he had successfully recovered from an on-the-job injury. Others include:

- Local 705 member Tim Smith, a UPS package car driver, had a $10,000 fine erased by an arbitrator who ruled that UPS had wrongfully fired him;
- A 1996 victory over UPS resulted in nine Teamsters receiving nearly $50,000 after UPS had used a company policy to short-change them on their accrued vacation days;
- KMart employees won a $50,000 award after the company illegally hired a private security firm to spy on them during an organizing drive which eventually gave them Local 705 representation; and
- Henry Birdsong of Industrial Transport received $30,000 in back pay and benefits from a 1994 arbitration.



Movers Contracts Administrator discusses strategy with stewards in June.

Moving Up to Decent Wages and Security

Awarding the "prize" for the Chicago-area industry most devastated by Ligurotis' corrupt and indifferent leadership is a tough call—but no one can deny that the Moving and Storage industry ranks right up there.

In the early 1980s, there were 3,000 union movers in Chicago. When the Ligurotis crew was done with them, only 200 were left. Rebuilding a sound foundation of good contracts and increased membership out of those ashes has been a long, hard battle. Local 705 Contract Administrator Jim Lyons recalls that "We were furious over the way Danny [Ligurotis] just decimated the industry—and more important, the economic lives of the men who worked there."

Lyons thinks we've finally turned the corner. "And we couldn't have done it without the men" who, through all the struggles, kept faith and pitched in to make things right again.

"Our last round of bargaining has made big gains," Lyons added. Driver salaries will reach $22.76 by the end of the current agreements, and helper pay will be $19.61 per hour. The members also are now in the top-rated Local 705 Health & Welfare plan.

All union moving company employees are paid time-and-a-half on Saturdays and double-time on Sundays.

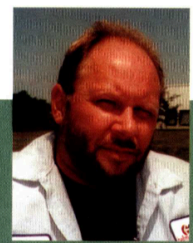
The union had realized that 90 percent of the downtown Chicago buildings featured union shops (engineers or their service employees or whatever). And in the suburbs, 75 percent to 80 percent of the buildings were union shops. "So we decided to build on that and persuade the owners of these buildings to deal with Teamster union movers," Lyons recalls.

Teamsters Local 705 recently has worked closely with other Chicago trade unions to foster the hiring of union-only moving companies for as many of Chicago's buildings as possible.

The residential and office moving industry in Chicago has been similar to the tank hauling industry—in that the moving companies used to bargain through their trade association, which devolved into individual contracts that undermined Teamster solidarity. In the past, Chicago's moving industry has seen strikes and lawsuits and NLRB struggles.

A two-day strike in 1997, for example, by movers employed at Noff's Atlas Van Lines occurred as a protest to more than 40 unfair labor practices commited by the moving company. Noffs-Atlantic Relocations Services (affiliated with Atlas) later was accused of the surveillance and harassment of Local 705 members and settled out-of-court for $134,000.

- Payments averaging around $4,000 each went to 37 Teamster movers cheated by Noffs out of legitimate work.
- At Beltmann North-American in mid-1997 the company was ruled to have deprived its employees of union coverage. Beltmann was forced to shell out more than $25,000.
- By late in the year 2000 movers working for Joyce Brothers, Hallett Movers and Beltmann were seeing major wage hikes and job security gains prohibiting day labor and new part-time hirings. And late last year, the 18 Local 705 members at Anderson Brothers sealed a multi-year contract featuring $80,000 in retroactive pay and monthly pension increases of $600.



Veteran mover Leonard Sutkevich recalls that before the trusteeship the moving companies had exploited the "red circle" sell-out from the Ligurotis machine to limit to 30 the number of working Teamsters — no matter which company employed them.

"Beltmann, Noffs, Joyce Brothers — they all used every red circle trick in the book," Sutkevich states. "If you were not in the union, and most weren't, then you had zero seniority — and you could be terminated for talking union."

"The improvements since 1994 have been monumental," he adds. "And the younger members now take for granted the good wages and health benefits that we never enjoyed earlier. They've come to expect it all — like the old Bulls were expected to win that Three-peat."

—Leonard Sutkevich

Tankers: "A New Way, A New Atmosphere"

The tank haul industry in Chicago at the time of the 1993 trusteeship was itself in need of a trustee or two. It had gone "feudal" when the old tanker fuel association evaporated.

Local 705 Contract Administrator Jim Lyons recalls that "Wages and contract language were all different. Many of the members were uncomfortable with even talking to us, concerned that management would discharge them if they met with us. Some of the tank companies were split.... part-Teamster and part non-union."

"Into Local 705 came a well-educated staff who could cite the laws to stand up to management. And for the first time they wanted an experienced driver to be in on negotiations."

–Local 705's Jim Tanis

Jim Tanis is a veteran Local 705 member and a licensed CDL-Hazmat truck driver piloting large tractor trailers of dangerous chemicals.

"I am a common-sense, straight-talking worker," he says, "and I tell you that we are pulling bombs through these cities. I'm on call seven days a week—every X-class driver has to deal with homeland security issues."

Tanis has been a steward at Ashland Chemical since 1991 in Willow Springs.

"Mr. Ligurotis—that's what everyone called him, the big guy in the three-piece suit," Tanis recalls. "He was always too busy to see us, even when we had a complaint about Ashland management. 'This guy is broke—go back to work,' Ligurotis would tell us. And then Ashland turns around and spends $550,000 on a non-union deal in Indiana.

"But after the new leadership came in, there was a complete regime change—new faces, a new way, a new atmosphere at Local 705," Tanis added. "The three-piece suit was gone, that attitude of authority was gone...you were now among the same guys who you were.

"Into Local 705 came a well-educated staff who could cite the laws to stand up to management. And for the first time they wanted an experienced driver to be in on negotiations—starting in 1993. Our new priorities became Health & Welfare, then pensions, then wage increases."

In 1994, the tank haulers were being paid well below MCLAC and TMI—about $4 to $5-per-hour below scale in wages and receiving only $30 to $40 per week in Health & Welfare and Pension contributions.

Lyons, Union Rep Steve Matter and their members must do individual contracts with the tank companies these days since there no longer is a Tanker association. There has evolved, however, a Chicago area major oil contract known as the Joint Area Tank Truck Agreement. This covers fuel haulers, chemical haulers and liquid asphalt haulers.

Lyons determined to bring all the members together regularly by creating the Tanker Craft Meeting so they could learn their basic rights in the workplace. Such basic education led to the negotiation of better wage rates and benefits for the members.

Now the tankers are at the top in the Health & Welfare rates, and also near the top of Local 705 in hourly wages. Drivers at BP/Amoco, for example, will earn in excess of $22.50 per hour, effective this October.

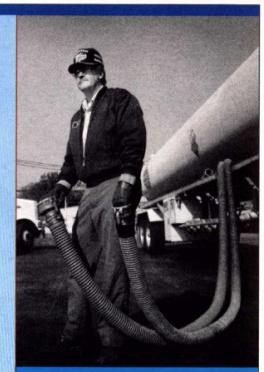


Photo by Earl Dotter

Dangerous work—and bad contracts—were the rule before the trusteeship.

Since 1994 through last year, tank hauler wages have increased more than economic inflation, climbing a solid 26 percent. Oil craft membership itself has more than doubled during that time, and some members have seen their wages doubled as well.

Tank haulers have benefitted from the innovative efforts of Local 705's Volunteer Organizing Committee, including lead organizer Bob Yodka from Avalon Petroleum. The VOC gradually overcame the poor reputation created by the Local's former Ligurotis-gang leadership.

Among the tank companies that are covered by these contracts are British Petroleum/Amoco, A.D. Connor, Ashland Chemical, Valvoline, Mohr Oil, Avalon, LCL Bulkmatic, Bell Fuels, PTO/Donlyn and Wirtz Cartage.

Amoco driver (before the BP merger) Bill Hooks takes a moment to talk with an UPDATE photographer while making a delivery.

Social Justice: As Crucial As Economic

Ever since the early years of the American labor movement more than a century ago, the American economy—hallmarked by its great, thriving middle-class of consumers—has been the envy of the rest of the world.

Huge corporations—such as Chicago's Sears Roebuck and Kraft Foods and Detroit's Ford Motor and General Motors—could never have grown to their behemoth status without a core of middle-class consumers to purchase their own employers' products.

As soon as American workers were being paid enough so they could purchase the fruits of their labors (especially cars and trucks), the middle-class grew to the proportions which now dominate not only the national economy but American politics itself.

And that didn't happen by accident. It happened because workers organized into trade unions and bargained for a greater slice of the pie. And because they cared about social justice as much as economic justice.

The 20th century priorities of organized labor became that century's broadest achievements—including Social Security, civil rights, Medicare and Medicaid, improved education, greater consumer protection and worker health and safety.

Teamsters joined thousands of other union members protesting trade with China at the nation's Capitol in Spring of 2000.

These achievements didn't come from any single labor union or even solely from the labor movement itself. They came from our joining forces with diverse but organized groups of men, women and children personally affected by these issues. These achievements came from solidarity—which every decent politician recognizes whenever he or she is confronted with it.

These gains usually are won (yet sometimes lost again) through politics and government not only in Washington, D.C. but in Springfield and in Chicago's City Hall. We get involved in these issues not just to "do good," but to avoid pitting our members against others in a race to the bottom.

No labor union, including the Teamsters Union, can afford to turn its back on these issues of social justice; they remain our responsibility wherever we confront a situation which tells us "That's not right."

And as we move further into the 21st century, economic justice and social justice require that the labor movement returns to its roots.

The months and years ahead must soon become just like the American years of the early 19th century (when early Americans were praised for their political activism and unique "art of combination") and the early 20th century with the great socially progressive and anti-trust movements. Those were years when Americans passionately combined their work lives and their social lives with their voting lives.

Local 705 does not exist in a vacuum

Not only is the Local a huge component of the IBT itself, but it is linked to progressive elements of society throughout Chicago and Illinois and across the entire nation. We are part of our whole society.

At Local 705 we take our politics very seriously—and Local 705 routinely turns out the greatest number of Teamster voters for elections (and contributions to DRIVE) anywhere else in the U.S.

Local 705 can boast of thousands of the best informed and highly opinionated Teamsters in America—as any of our membership meetings clearly demonstrate—and the politicians know this to be true.

We at Local 705 believe that democracy is for those who *exercise* it.

Local 705 is politically active because that's what it takes to make progress towards not only economic justice (through openly democratic trade unionism) but the equal goal of social justice which often gives our lives more meaning.

That translates into a number of two-way streets. It starts with the neighborhood around Teamster City on the Near West Side of Chicago—once a slum but now on the rebound—where we help our neighbors (like the Salvation Army) when we can, as they may help us tomorrow.

Social justice embraces the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and includes progressive campaigns such as Jobs With Justice. It embraces the Reverend Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition and Operation PUSH and it reaches out to Hispanic law students who need our help.

Social justice speaks of "industrial citizenship" and involvement in our scores of working communities throughout greater Chicago. It means building the coalitions (as we did during the 1997 UPS strike) which give a voice on the job, in our communities, and wider support for our goals.

Both social justice and economic justice require us to be militantly opposed to the NAFTA enacted by the Congress and the Clinton Administration now being pushed further by the Bush gang. The North American Free Trade Agreement has been a travesty for good jobs in America and a disaster for serious related issues ranging from environmental health to highway safety.

In a nutshell, these "free trade" policies have robbed working families of millions of American jobs, depressed our wages, and shifted the balance of power from average Americans to international (and unaccountable) corporate conglomerates.

On the issue of highway safety alone, according to consumer groups, at least 41 percent of Mexican trucks have failed U.S. inspections at our southwest borders. Yet the Bush Administration (citing pathetic concerns about NAFTA trade sanctions) wants to open those borders to these more-than-two-million lethal road hazards per year.

Turning its back on good American jobs, the Bush-Lite Administration and its corporate zealots want to extend the NAFTA concept not only to China (the world's largest market) but Chile and other Latin American nations.

Now Teamster Local 705 is well-known around the city. Jerry Zero has been the president of the Chicago metropolitan chapter of The Labor Party, is a leader in Jobs with Justice, and he has forged Local 705 alliances with various progressive religious and social action groups.

Labor Party Tenets

Among other principles, The Labor Party supports changing the labor laws to force card-check recognition (limiting employers' union-busting activities); ending "tax break" competition between the states (employers use this strategy to whipsaw workers and their communities); and taxing CEO stock options valued at more than $1 million (to suppress outrageous management pay and scandalous "golden-parachute" retirements).

Social justice also means opposing that senseless war in Iraq which we stood up against last October and which, as every week passes, looks to be as disastrous as we warned it would be.

We in Local 705 have witnessed what is happening to American sons and daughters as they continue operations in Iraq which have proven to be not only vastly expensive and reckless, but damaging to our own best interests around the world.

Rand Beers, until recently the Bush White House's adviser on counter-terrorism from the prestigious National Security Council, in June declared that the Bush Administration is "underestimating the enemy" and has failed to address the root causes of terror.

A 35-year veteran of U.S. intelligence quarters (who has worked with every president since Ronald Reagan), Beers believes that the focus on Iraq has robbed domestic security of manpower, brainpower and money. The Iraq war created fissures in the United States' counter-terrorism alliances, he stated, and could breed a new generation of Al Qaeda recruits. Many of his government colleagues, he added, thought Iraq was an "ill-conceived and poorly executed strategy."

Social issues should be taken seriously in every trade union, even though they were largely ignored during recent decades of "business unionism." Corporate executives and their political allies then were enabled to effectively portray unions as greedy.

But when we help the poor, the homeless, the elderly, we prove that we are not only a part of our communities but part of the solutions to their problems.

It also makes it harder for Corporate America to isolate and hammer us.

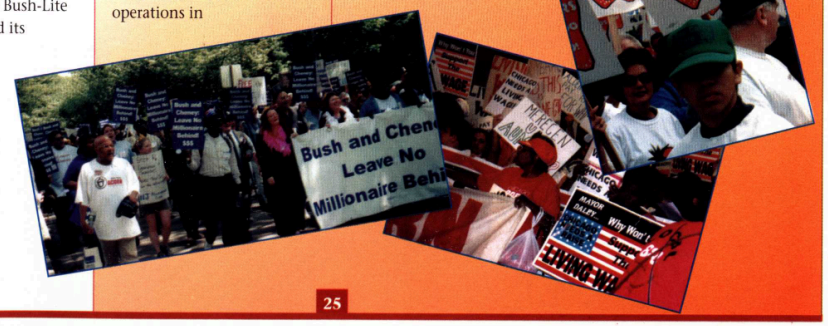
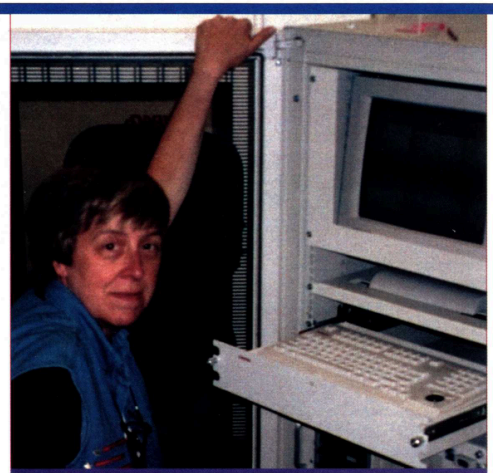


Photo by Earl Dotter

No matter where the struggle for social justice occurs, Local 705 is there to help.



Ratcheting Up Into the 21st Century

When the reform team took the reins 10 years ago, Local 705's staff and office procedures were all horse-and-buggy—firmly embedded in early 20th-century clerical technologies and in desperate need of modernization to make them responsive to the soon-to-be-growing Local's needs.

"It was almost pathetic," recalls one advisor brought in during the 1993 trusteeship. "Instead of computers and high-tech office equipment, people were still trying to record vital information by writing into hand ledgers."

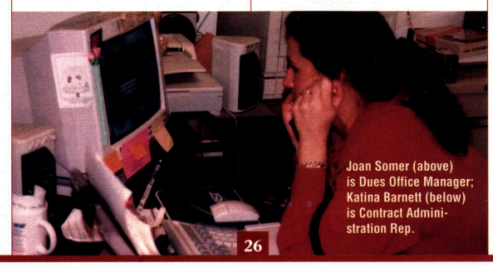
Perhaps the first priority was modernizing the dues collections system. "In the 1990's, it used to take anywhere from three to five fulltime staffers up to five days each month to account for the dues being paid to Local 705 just from UPS alone," recalls 705 dues system manager Joan Somer. "Now we can do it overnight."

The "can do" factors in Local 705's customized dues system include a state-of-the-art tower "server" and a software program from California-based Union Solutions Co. specially customized by a professional programmer for the needs of America's largest truck drivers' Local.

This server not only runs an entire 705 dues system unequalled among any other Local or national Teamster operations, but handles the growing demands of the finance department, keeps track of all grievances and arbitrations, and all the personal computers functioning at the thoroughly modern Local 705. A high-speed printer also has been installed to supplement the numerous shared PC printers.

You also may have noticed that our telephone switchboard was upgraded several years ago (along with installation of an intercom system to improve staff responsiveness to calls from reps and members). And new cubicles have been installed to provide better work stations for all the union representatives for 705's diverse crafts throughout Chicago.

Recent enactment of the national Health Information Privacy Protection Act (HIPPA) required the Local to set up separate office space and modern information technology for both the Pension Fund and the Health & Welfare Fund—which are now headquartered in their own space within the Jackson Boulevard headquarters.



Joan Somer (above) is Dues Office Manager; Katina Barnett (below) is Contract Administration Rep.

The best-qualified staff

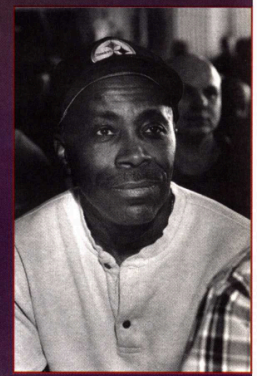
In his new book, "Reforming Chicago's Teamsters", author Dr. Robert Bruno spotlights criticism during the 1993-95 trusteeship and later that reformers had brought in "outsiders" to run Local 705. "In fact," Bruno writes that Secretary-Treasurer Jerry "Zero had brought on board a cadre of talented, experienced, hard-working and dedicated unionists."

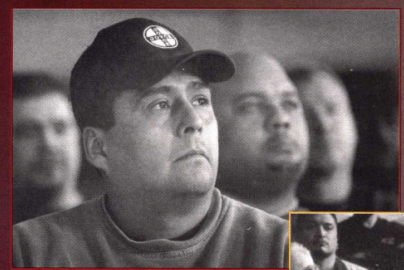
Zero himself explains that he's never looked at his hiring responsibilities as an outsider vs. insider determination. "If I have a choice between someone who is from Chicago but merely capable and someone who is first-rate but out of state, the latter will be my pick," says Zero. "I respond to critics, 'Find me someone homegrown in Chicago who can do the job better and I'll terminate the outsider.' So far, they haven't come up with a single one," Zero added nonplussed.

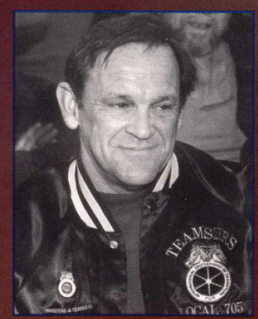
For Local 705 staffers and rank-and-file members alike the Local has adopted a policy of promoting local advancements through education. "We send rank-and-file members to classes at Loyola, DePaul, the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois and other schools so they can improve themselves through training and education," Zero points out.

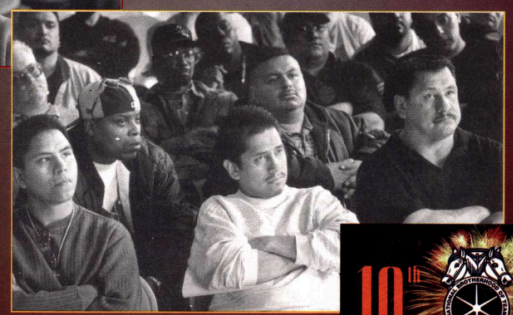
The Local 705 reform team remains committed to further modernization and to keep up with management and the technological advances of the 21st century in order to competitively serve this great Local's 20,000-plus members.

"The City of Big Shoulders" Has A Human Face







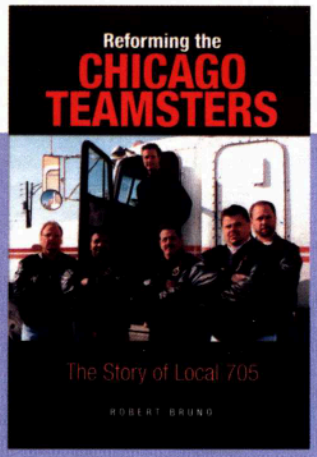


All photos on this page by Earl Dotter.

10th Anniversary

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 705

What Others Are Saying About Us:



Dr. Robert Bruno, author
"Reforming the Chicago Teamsters — The Story of Local 705"
June, 2003 Page 149

"By democratizing, the local redefined its purpose from self-perpetuation and elite self-interest to doing what is necessary for improving the working lives of its members. In other words, Local 705 was now a liberating tool of the membership rather than a mechanism for fulfilling the alien interests of non-workers."

READER

"Of all the leaders of Chicago-area locals who once professed support for reform, those at Local 705 have remained the most steadfastly committed to making the Teamsters an aggressively innovative union controlled by the members."

David Moberg, Labor writer
The Chicago Reader, June 4, 1999

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

"Other reforms go to the heart of union business. New microphones are hooked up in the union hall so members can be heard at meetings. Rank-and-filers serve on committees to negotiate contracts with employers. Aided by union headquarters in Washington, the local trains members to be stewards, who help resolve problems on the job site....Now, representatives spend their mornings visiting members at truck depots and other work sites. A newsletter updates members on the progress of negotiations, grievances and organizing drives."

Robert L. Rose, staff writer
The Wall Street Journal (front page), April 6, 1998

The Nation.

"Yet, the small peace circle within labor continues to expand as the threat of war with Iraq persists... Chicago-based Teamsters Local 705, the second largest in the country, also adopted an antiwar resolution. The 100,000-member California Teachers Union did the same."

Marc Cooper, writing in
The Nation Magazine, December 9, 2002

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